Chomp for Windows

Version W1.1
by
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Introduction

Welcome to Chomp for Windows. This is a game closely patterned
after Pac-Man(tm) for the Microsoft Windows environment. I have
tried to make the game as faithful as possible to the original.
However, since I haven't seen a Pac-Man arcade machine for years, all
of the elements of the game have been recalled from memory.
Chomp for Windows is an enhanced port of Xchomp, a similar game
that runs under the X Window System on UNIX workstations. The
enhancements include a full color display and an adjustable game
speed. Unlike the original Pac-Man, Chomp has several different
mazes, but it does not have side tunnels. The latter feature is
planned for a future version of the software.

Gameplay Description

The purpose of the game, as in all arcade-style games, is to amass
the highest possible score. However, you may find that the fun in the
game is in reaching the highest possible level; at least, that is what I
found fun about the original. You, the player, are the circular yellow
mouth moving around the maze. Initially, this maze is filled with
white dots. To complete a level, you must eat all the dots. To eat a
dot, you simply pass over it, collecting 10 points. There are also four
ghosts chasing you around the maze. Allowing a ghost to catch you
costs you a life.

Each maze also contains several large flashing dots -- the power dots.
Eating one of these gives you 50 points and temporarily gives you the
power to eat the ghosts. While the ghosts are edible, they are blue,
they move at half-speed, and they try to run away from you. Eating a
ghost adds points to your score; the number of points added is briefly
displayed on the screen. Once a ghost has been eaten, it turns into a
harmless pair of eyes moving at double-speed, seeking return to the
ghost box in the center of the maze. When it gets there, it is "reborn"
and resumes chasing you around. The ghosts only stay edible for a
short period of time. They will not change back suddenly, however;
they will flash for a couple of seconds to warn you before they do.
While they are flashing, you can still eat them.

Each level in the game is indicated by a symbol. For example, the
first few levels are "fruit" levels, that is, they are indicated by small
fruit icons at the bottom of the Chomp window. Once in a while, the
symbol corresponding to the current level appears in the maze.
Eating the symbol adds points to your score, and the number of
points added is displayed on the screen. On some of the higher levels
of the game, this is a very substantial number. Once a symbol

appears, you only have several seconds to get to it.

You start the game with three lives. Reaching a score of 10,000 points awards you an extra life.

Game Control

This is strictly a keyboard-controlled game. The original game had very simple controls -- one four-directional joystick. All control in Chomp for Windows is done using the arrow keys. Pressing an arrow key is equivalent to tilting a joystick in the corresponding direction and holding it down; the player on the screen continues moving in its current direction until motion in the specified direction is possible, or until it hits a maze wall, in which case it stops. Only one keystroke is remembered; the last key pressed indicates the desired direction of motion. If this sounds complex, forget it, and just play the game. I believe that once you get used to the game control, you will find it fairly natural. One hint that I can give you is that you will need to be thinking ahead a little bit at all times. For example, if you want the player to take the next left turn, press the left arrow key immediately -- the keystroke will be remembered; if you wait too long, the player may move past the turn you meant to take, and you will need to turn around. Do not hold down any arrow key; just tap it, and be careful not to press two keys at a time. I suggest playing a game or two at a slow speed to get used to the controls.

You can pause the game by pressing the space bar at any time. While in Pause Mode, you can press F2 to abort the game and return to the title screen, or F3 to exit Chomp for Windows. The game will also enter Pause Mode if you minimize the Chomp window.

The Program

The Chomp for Windows program must be run in protected mode; it will not run in Windows' Real Mode, nor will it allow multiple instances of itself to be loaded. Invoking a second Chomp for Windows instance will simply restore and give keyboard focus to the window belonging to the instance already in memory.

This program attempts smooth animation in the Microsoft Windows environment, and therefore it requires a fairly powerful PC. Although it is a true "well-behaved" Windows application, the program should obviously be run with all other loaded programs minimized or "asleep" -- waiting for input from the user. Make sure you move the mouse cursor well out of the Chomp window in order to prevent it from flashing during gameplay. The minimum recommended hardware platform for Chomp for Windows is a 16MHz 286 or 386SX machine with a decent color video configuration.

The Chomp for Windows program needs a bit of time to initialize when it loads. This may be in the range of 10 or 15 seconds on slower machines.

If you find that the game runs too quickly or too slowly, try adjusting the Animation Delay value in the Settings dialog box, accessed from the system menu of the Chomp window. On a 16MHz machine, this value should be set to zero, resulting in the fastest motion possible, which should be just acceptable on such a machine. The delay value is calibrated so that a setting of 150 works well in a 33MHz 386 system with fast VGA video. Values up to 999 may be entered.

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The registration fee for Chomp for Windows is $20 with a free 7-day trial period. If you intend to use Chomp for Windows beyond the trial period and would like free updates and discounts on future Neolithic Software products, please register.

The source code for Chomp for Windows is available, along with the registration, for $45.

If you would like to register Chomp for Windows, obtain the source code, find out about other versions of Chomp, or make any comments or suggestions, please send mail to:

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